

Amendments to Claims

1 (currently amended). A laminate structure comprising a layer of fabric, wherein a first polymer having a first stress index is substantially contained completely impregnated within the fabric layer, wherein the surfaces of the fabric are substantially free of the first polymer and at least one layer of a second polymer is coated onto at least one surface of the fabric, the second polymer having a second stress index higher than the first stress index.

2 (original). The structure of Claim 1, wherein the first polymer has a stress index of about 5 MPa or less and the second polymer has a stress index of least about 6 MPa.

3 (original). The structure of Claim 1, wherein the first polymer has a stress index of about 6 MPa or less and the second polymer has a stress index of least about 7 MPa.

4 (original). The structure of Claim 3 wherein the first polymer is ethylene methyl acrylate.

5 (original). The structure of Claim 2, wherein the first polymer has a stress index of about 4 MPa or less.

6 (original). The structure of Claim 2, wherein the second polymer has a stress index of least about 9 MPa.

7 (original). The structure of Claim 1, wherein the first polymer is selected from the group consisting of ethylene copolymer having a total comonomer content of at least 35 weight percent; thermoplastic elastomers having a Shore A hardness of 90 or less; fully crosslinked rubber polymers having a Shore A hardness of 90 or less; and polyvinyl chloride having a Shore A hardness of 90 or less.

8 (original). The structure of Claim 7, wherein the ethylene copolymer is selected from the group consisting of ethylene n-butyl acrylate carbon monoxide, ethylene vinyl acetate, ethylene vinyl acetate carbon monoxide, ethylene butyl acrylate, ethylene n-butyl acrylate glycidyl methacrylate, ethylene ethyl acrylate, ethylene acrylic acid, ethylene ethyl acrylate glycidyl methacrylate, and ethylene methyl acrylate glycidyl methacrylate.

9 (original). The structure of Claim 7, wherein the thermoplastic elastomer is selected from the group consisting of styrene ethylene butylene styrene and polypropylene/ ethylene propylene diene monomer rubber.

10 (original). The structure of Claim 1, wherein the second polymer is selected from the group consisting of ethylene copolymer; polyethylene; polypropylene; polyvinyl chloride; polypropylene/ethylene propylene diene monomer and styrene ethylene butylene styrene.

11 (original). The structure of Claim 1, having a trapezoidal tear strength of at least about 80% of the trapezoidal tear strength of the fabric.

12 (original). The structure of Claim 1, having a trapezoidal tear strength of at least about 18 kilograms in the machine direction.

13 (original). The structure of Claim 1, wherein the fabric comprises a polyolefin selected from the group consisting of polyethylene and polypropylene.

14 (original). The structure of claim 13, wherein the fabric is a spunbonded polypropylene.

15 (original). The structure of claim 1, wherein the fabric is a nonwoven material.

16 (original). The structure of claim 1, wherein the fabric is a woven material.

17 (canceled).

18 (withdrawn). A method of forming a laminate comprising the steps of
providing a fabric layer;
applying a first polymer having a first stress index onto at least one surface of the fabric,
applying pressure and temperature to the fabric layer and first polymer, such that the first polymer is substantially impregnated into the fabric layer;
applying a second polymer onto at least one surface of the fabric, the second polymer having a second stress index higher than the first stress index.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-16 of the subject application are respectfully requested. Claim 1 has been amended above. Support is found in the specification at page 3, lines 8 -14 and at page 6, lines 6-20.

Rejection Under 35 USC 102/103

Claims 1-8, 10-13, and 15-17 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by or in the alternative under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over US 4,631,908 to Pithouse et al (Pithouse).

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the telephone interviews with the Examiner on October 2, 2003 and October 10, 2003. The amendment to claim 1 is provided to more clearly recite that a first polymer is impregnated into the fabric and substantially contained within the fabric and further that the surfaces of the fabric are substantially free of the first polymer. As such, it is believed that the rejection has been obviated both as to anticipation and as to obviousness and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a)

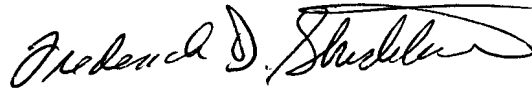
Claims 9 and 14 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Pithouse as applied to claims 7 and 13 above. Claims 9 and 14 ultimately depend from amended claim 1, which has been demonstrated above as not obvious over Pithouse and therefore those claims are not obvious either.

As such, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that the foregoing is a complete response to the subject Office Action. Applicants believe that all rejections have been overcome and that the instant claims are now in condition for allowance. If any matters remain for resolution, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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